

CHAPTER XXIV

WITHOUT GUIDES

WE had not gone very far on our new day's march when it was announced that the sickly camel was quite done for and could go no farther. He really looked so thin and miserable that I thought that no better service could be done him than to put him out of his misery before another day's suffering; but the herdsman who accompanied us begged us to leave him alive, for he knew how to treat him, and after resting a time in the company of his fellows from Mehabad he would recover. He was released from his muzzle-rope, removed from the line of the caravan, and he stood lonely and abandoned, looking after us when we were hard-hearted enough to leave him to his fate.

The sky is overcast, but soon clears up, and the air feels fresh and cool after a temperature of 28°. We steer south-south-east to march round the southern extension of the Kevir, part of which is visible to the east-north-east. On the left we have a broad flat valley or depression between the chain we have hitherto skirted and Kuh-i-busurgi, and to the right we have still the prolongation of the former, the range which we called the "southern hills," and which we first saw from Kuh-i-nakshir. Here we are passing through a district called Seile-saus. At a small knoll with a waymark a fold is seen, and the herdsman runs to see if there is any water. After he has signalled with his hands in the affirmative, we go thither with a camel and a sheepskin. A small pool of dammed-up rain-water from the last showers remains after the Mehabad camels have drunk from it yesterday. There is just enough